

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXVII. THE FAGGOTS BURN.

FOR some days everything went on pleasantly at Monasterlea. May had doubts and fears about the bargain that had been concluded between uncle and nephew; but seeing that doubts and fears were not relished by Paul, she put them all away from her, and saw everything in the light by which he wished her to look at it. Paul paid frequent visits to Tobereevil, and took long walks and rides over the property, making himself acquainted with the scene of his future duties; which were first to be those of servant, and afterwards those of master. The affairs of Miss Martha's farm were rather neglected for the first week or so, but the old lady was right glad to give holiday to her new manager for any good reason he could show, and resumed her farming habits till such time as his various duties could be made to run side by side. There was no wearying, meanwhile, between the two lovers, of the joyous intercourse which they now tasted; of the blithe chatter which they carried on while roaming over hill and dale. There was no end to the leases which they granted in imagination, the comfortable cottages they built as they went along, the half-yearly debts of rent which they remitted to the long overtaxed families in which the father had broken a leg, or the mother was in a consumption. Such a thing as an eviction was to be heard of never more. And if May, in the midst of Paul's enjoyment of his make-believe power, felt a question rising like a trouble within her, "What

will Simon, the miser, say to all these changes?" the words were never spoken, and the question was crushed down again in her heart, where it lay; a little pain that would at times throb into a great one.

In the mean time the snow fell often and the nights were frosty, and the evenings had become very delightful in the little brown parlour. Ghosts had come into season, and Nannie's stories were in fashion in the kitchen, especially of an evening, when Bridget's gossips and sweethearts had come in to lend a hand with the churning. It was just at the close of one of the short dark days before Christmas, in the midst of a high storm, that a new and rough current came troubling the happy tide of human life at Monasterlea.

May had not gone out with Paul that morning, because it was to be a busy day with her, and a busy day it had been. There had been butter-making in the morning and baking in the afternoon, and the superintendence of these matters belonged to May. It was all over now, and she was expecting Paul; for Paul, as a rule, spent his evenings at Monasterlea. She was dressed in a long woollen robe of a soft plum colour, with dazzling white ruffles at her throat and wrists. She was standing by the fire, with a piece of needlework in her hand, but it was too dark to work. The shifting light of flames is a pleasant light to think by, and May was in a reverie, looking at pictures in her mind, whose colours were as fair as those of a rainbow. She looked a picture herself, as the fire illumined her dark braids of hair, and all the tints, and curves, and dimples of her face. Even in repose and by such light the face looked full enough of humour, and sweetness, and thought, and maybe passion, to make a painter's fame. She

looked a woman who could make the happiness of every creature who might come near her; but who could possibly break her heart. And even at this moment there was trouble for her in the air. The trees of Tobereevil were shrieking two miles away in the wind: and ill-luck came and knocked at the hall-door at Monasterlea.

May went quickly to the door, thinking it was Paul, and saw ill-luck standing waiting for admittance. It had a tall, buxom shape, with a riding-habit fluttering about the graceful limbs. There was some light hair streaming from a gleaming face whose beauty shone even through the shadows which almost hid it. There was a hat somewhat maltreated by the wind and sleet, with shrunken feathers streaming after the hair. Ill-luck had come in the shape of Katherine Archbold.

If you had spoken to May an hour ago about Katherine, it would have appeared, by her answer, that she had not seen, nor heard, nor thought of that young lady for a period that seemed as long as seven years. She would have remembered that she was a person who had ruined poor Christopher; but as Christopher had written several cheerful letters of late, and seemed to be doing well, May and Paul had lately made up their minds, in their passion for poverty, that Christopher would, in the long run, be much better without his money. She would also have remembered that Katherine was a person who had laid some claim to Paul's affections, and she pitied her in this, seeing that Paul had no liking for her. It is no untruth to assert that, for the past few weeks, she had utterly forgotten her existence, so completely had May been shut up in her own rosy world. And yet here was the splendid Katherine, standing dishevelled, like a storm-sprite, at the door of her little home.

"Let me in, and don't look so amazed to see me," cried Katherine, in the light, amused tone which she had always used with May. "For goodness sake shut the door, and give me a welcome. I think I deserve one after riding so far to see you."

"I beg your pardon," said May, "do come in to the fire. Oh, dear, how wet you are, and how splashed with snow and mud! You must change your clothes immediately. And who has come with you? There is somebody still outside in the cold."

"There is nobody," said Katherine; "I came alone."

"Alone!" echoed May. "And do your father and mother know it?"

"Perhaps, by this time," said Katherine, carelessly. "But you know I never ask leave for what I do. I left a written message which they will find, no doubt. But first they shall have a fright."

"How could you be so cruel?" burst forth May.

"There, little goody! Hold your tongue and don't scold," said Katherine, tossing off her hat. "I choose to punish every one who tyrannises over me. They are very safe, since they find I have not drowned myself, nor eloped with some bog-trotter, as they will have been wise enough to suppose. In the mean time, are you going to be my enemy or my friend?"

"Your friend," said May. "And I have no right to scold you, nor to pry into your affairs. Of course I think you wrong, but I also think you wet and tired. And your horse? Did any one take your horse?"

Katherine laughed. "I let him go at the gate," said she, "and he will trot back to Camlough."

"And terrify your parents?"

"Probably," replied Katherine. "For Heaven's sake don't stare so, but get me some dry clothes, as you said you would. They will send me some things presently, but I have brought nothing with me."

May said no more, but led her unexpected visitor away to her own chamber. It was the very same room in which she had dressed her once before, when they were children. It was the most whimsical room in the house, all nooks and angles, and from its sloping ceiling and the many twists in its walls, was peculiarly well suited to show off the gambols of the goblins which fire-light will set capering. It had been made out of a bit of an old sacristy, and there was a rather grim and sorrowful ghost of a sculptured crucifix in bas-relief on the wall, all chipped and almost worn away by time; besides some cherubs' heads with curly locks and round cheeks, broken noses and pouting lips, clustered under the slantings in the corners of the ceiling. In the midst of these relics flourished all the little niceties which a girl loves to gather round her in her own particular sanctum. The guest having been arrayed in the prettiest gown she possessed, and placed in a comfortable chair at the hearth, May went down on her knees to make the fire burn more brightly. Bridget brought fresh fuel, and took a message to Miss Martha.

"Allow me," said Katherine, and she took the little bundles of sticks from Bridget's hand, and fed the flames with them, from time to time, as she talked. May sat on the hearth-rug and listened to her talking.

"You wonder, I suppose, what brought me away from home in such a hurry, and what made me come here to give my company to you? You are dying with curiosity, and yet you are too polite to ask."

Here Katherine cast a stick upon the blazing fire.

"You see my father and mother have pleased themselves to be angry with me. They are quite out of humour because I wish to amuse myself. It is beyond all reason their wanting to dictate to me. They sulked at me for a week about that Christopher. By the way, he came here and made a fuss, did he not?"

"He came here and nearly died," said May.

Katherine shrugged her shoulders and looked complacent, and another stick was tossed into the flames.

"Well, I can't help it. If people will be so silly, I am not to be held accountable. It was a pity to lose the money, but I did not think of that. People begin to think of money when they grow a little older. When one has had all that one could fancy it is not easy to learn prudence; and Sir John and Lady Archbold need not try to teach me now. I could not bring them to their senses without giving them a fright. They shall be frightened for twelve hours; till my maid shall find a letter, as if by the merest chance. And then they will send my trunks. They shall be very anxious to see me before they get me back again."

May was silent. With all her wish to be hospitable she could not find in her heart that she was glad of the chance that had brought Miss Archbold to Monasterlea. Katherine, meantime, fed the flames with a lavish hand, and the fire leaped and burned with a good roar in the chimney; and May looked up and suddenly saw that the sticks which the visitor held in her lap were those very wicked faggots which she herself had hidden out of sight and forgotten. It was not at all wonderful that Bridget should have found them and turned them to account; but May did not like to see them in Katherine's hands. A strange fit of superstitious bewilderment came upon her; she saw impish spirits dancing through the flames, and clambering up the smoke-ladders and mocking at her as if they had

overreached her. Turning her eyes from the fire she saw Katherine's defiant face shining through the glamour made by the up-springing of the flames, and the down-pressing of the shadows around her glittering golden head. At the same moment she heard the muffled sound of Paul's voice and steps in the outer hall. The sound seemed dim and far away, and did not break cheerfully upon the strange mood that had befallen her. Instead of that it mixed itself up with a sense of approaching danger which she was powerless to avert. The danger had come with Katherine, and was wrapped up in her; belonged to Katherine, and would work through her. She was the instrument of all the evil that was in truth haunting Paul. She had come as ill-luck to Monasterlea.

Sympathy with Paul's troubles was making May superstitious. She was attacked by this terror as by a fit of sudden sickness; and making an effort to shake it off sprang up kneeling on the hearth.

"Hark!" said Katherine, dropping the faggots and holding up her jewelled finger. "There is the lover. Is he not the lover? How angry you were that day when I showed you to yourself! How you denied my penetration! Well, was I not right? Has not all that I predicted come to pass?"

"No," said May; "you were altogether wrong."

"Hey-day! What is that? Are you not engaged to the handsome Paul?"

"Yes; but I would rather not talk about it."

"Get away with you!" said Katherine. "You are as prim as an old maid. When are you to be married?"

"Oh, I do not know. There is much to be done first."

"Is there, indeed. And you are both good and patient?"

"We are both very happy," said May, simply.

"How nice to be looking on at such a pretty pair of lovers!" said Katherine. "So patient and so happy, in spite of a long, long engagement with a vague, vague ending! That is what I shall be doing while I am here. It will interest me extremely. You must introduce me to your Paul. I shall be civil to him for your sake, and he will like me I dare say. Perhaps he will remember having seen me before."

"He remembers you," said May, mechanically, with her eyes on a half-burnt faggot between the bars.

"Oh! He told you so when you repeated to him all that folly which I talked about him at Camlough."

An involuntary look of disgust crept for a moment into May's eyes. It did not escape Katherine, nor was she likely to forget it when it presently disappeared.

"You are mistaken in me," said May; "I could not so betray any one."

"Ah! that is good of you. Primmness, I see, sometimes does one a service. I remember now that I made you promise to forget that conversation."

"I have a better memory than you."

"You have a better everything, my dear, except physique and self-will. I yield to no one in beauty, and I have a talent for having my own way, which amounts to genius. You shall see it in full working before I have been here long."

May looked up brightly, and laughed at her audacity, which, she yet knew very well, was not a merry jest. After all, this was no unearthly creature of unhallowed powers not to be baffled; but only wild Katherine Archbold. It was her nature to do mischief where she could, but May had a subtle power of her own, of which she was not all unconscious. And she would not fear any other woman on earth, were that other woman incarnate beauty itself. Something of this Katherine found in the speaking dark eyes. So she became more offensive.

"Are you desperately in love with your fine Paul?" she asked.

"I don't dislike him," said May.

"Bah!" said Katherine, provoked. "As if I did not know that you are a soft little fool, ready to love anybody!"

May coloured. "Not anybody," she said; "not you, for instance."

"Oh, she has lost her temper at last. Not me? Well, look here. I will make a bargain with you. You begin to love me with all your might, and I will give you this pretty ring. It is worth a hundred guineas."

The diamonds flashed in the light of the blazing faggots, as Katherine held the ring poised on the end of her little finger.

May put her hands behind her back. "Keep it," she said; "I am too poor to give you even the wretched price you ask for it."

Katherine frowned and smiled. "I always knew you were obstinate," she said, "but you are sharper than I thought you."

There was sudden silence between the two girls. It was as if both had under-

stood that there had been more under their words than either had cared to utter. Again the firelight played its weird pranks about the guest's golden head, and threw strange meanings into her eyes, and laid ominous touches upon her mouth. And again the superstitious, unaccountable terror of approaching harm gathered round May's heart; till a welcome household sound in the passage broke the spell, and she felt ashamed of herself.

"Come!" she said, "we are a silly pair to stay here sparring at one another. Don't you think we had better go and be sociable in the parlour? My aunt is waiting for us, and I want to present you to Mr. Finiston."

"Wait!" said Katherine. She had lighted the only remaining stick of the wicked faggots. She held the blazing wood in her hand, and watched it burn away slowly towards her fingers, while a lurking smile played about the corners of her mouth. "I am reading your future. I am looking to see whether you will be married to your Paul. Did you ever hear of Margaret and her daisy? Well, if the burnt part breaks and drops away before the flame reaches my finger it is the breaking of your engagement. Watch, watch! It is gone!"

The piece of red charcoal had dropped on the hearth. Katherine tossed the burning morsel that remained into the fire. The flames dropped in the grate, and the room was in darkness.

"Don't be a goose!" said May, and opened the door into the lighted passage.

But Katherine was not accustomed to be called a goose.

PERIODICAL COMETS.

THE discoveries of modern science lead us to infer that there is a great resemblance, in many particulars, between the greatest and the smallest bodies in creation; that atoms, like suns, are separated from each other by distances which are enormous when compared with their actual size; that the molecules composing a bar of iron waltz round and round in circles or ovals, exactly as Mars, Jupiter, and the rest of us, whirl round Phœbus, and Phœbus himself and his fellow-stars revolve round some unknown central point. Perhaps some atoms, in bodies called solid, may dance up and down, like gnats in sunshine, the swarm remaining stationary while each gnat keeps changing its place

in the airy reel; others may simply vibrate backwards and forwards, like bullets fixed at the tip of a steel spring, and made to oscillate by being pulled aside from their position of repose.

Atoms, too, like suns and planets, are each endowed with their own proper force. Their inconceivable minuteness by no means renders them insignificant. They are veritable giants in disguise. The attractive power of Sirius may be enormous, overwhelming the mind with such questions as, How much would a pound of lead, weighed on earth, weigh on the dog-star's surface, if, indeed, it has a surface? But the energy of many atoms is all but irresistible. Freezing water will burst iron bottles into fragments. Terrible explosions are often the result of the attraction exerted on each other by atoms which are determined to join company at the first opportunity. Nothing can prevent their ultimate union.

We cannot suppose the atoms of which bodies are composed to be in actual contact, for in that case their expansion and contraction by heat and cold, and other causes, would be impossible. And yet we are unable to force them closer together than they choose to go. Water, so yielding to the touch, is very slightly compressible. Pressure has been tried in vain to permanently augment the density of soft metals. Steam, ice, gunpowder, fulminating mercury, afford familiar instances of the power of atoms. In short, the smallest molecules, like the largest stars, are separated by intervening spaces, perform their allotted motions, and are gifted with strength enough to insure them respect.

As the least and the largest bodies resemble each other, so do the lightest and the heaviest in their obedience to universal laws. Nothing, to be visible, can be conceived lighter than a comet. Had the ancients been aware of the excessive levity now attributed to them, they would have accounted for their extraordinary conduct by that cause. And yet the circumstance that stars shine through comets ought to have raised the suspicion that they could not be very dense. And yet, according to some, the moon was once a comet; Saturn also was once a comet. But the moon or Saturn, either of them, contains matter enough to make millions of comets.

Had the lightness of comets been known in former days, it might have dissipated all fears of their influence in causing either political disasters or physical catastrophes. Such things of nought can neither be

capable of kindling wars, upraising deluges, nor splitting worlds into two or more pieces. These remarkable bodies sometimes throw out tails one hundred millions of miles in length and fifty thousand in diameter. What, however, is the mass of matter of which such a prodigious tail consists? According to Sir John Herschel, if it were all swept together and suitably compressed, it might be carted away in a single horse-load. Can bodies so infinitely light, we feel tempted to ask, be subject to the ordinary laws of gravity?

Tycho Brahé was the first, in modern times, to find that comets are not meteors engendered in the atmosphere, as held by Aristotle and numerous astronomers of later date. Kepler was of the same opinion, which he illustrated by a striking comparison, not devoid of plausibility. "Since the sea has its whales and leviathans, it is natural that the air should have its monsters and comets, shapeless bodies engendered from its superfluous dregs by a sort of animal faculty. As to their number, there are more comets in the sky than fish in the ocean." They were consequently supposed to be not far distant from the earth. But Tycho Brahé, not being able to ascertain the diurnal parallax of the comet of 1577, concluded that it must be further away from the earth than the moon.

Their movements were still more puzzling. Kepler supposed that they advanced in straight lines; that is, we suppose, in curves parallel to the surface of the earth. It was a nearer guess that comets describe a parabolic orbit—if that can be called an orbit which is not an orbit (there being no return), but only a path. This parabola run through by a comet, may be compared to a huge pair of sugar-tongs, with legs of infinite or rather indefinite length, which could never meet at their tips, even to grasp and catch the sweetest, solidest, most inviting of comets. Each comet came from a sort of nowhere, and, after showing itself to the wondering earth, returned to its nowhere again, lost in the depths of the heavens, the abyss of space, beyond the limits of the known celestial regions.

But unfortunately for such suppositions, there is no such place as nowhere, any more than there is such a fact or process as annihilation. There is change; which is life. A condition of material unchangeability and inaction would be absolute death; instead of which we everywhere meet with force and movement. The limbo of poets, if it have

a name, has no local habitation discoverable by telescopes. There is no "behind the scenes" in the heavens whence new stars and comets may make their entrance and strut and fret their hour on the celestial stage; no lumber garret or property room into which they can retire and be stowed out of the way. The universe is an open, infinite somewhere, at every point of its extent as much a real somewhere as it is here, where we happen for the moment to be bowling through space.

A little thought will, therefore, tell us that it is just as interesting to know what becomes of comets after we lose sight of them as to watch their doings while they are visible. Tycho Brahé's observations led him to infer that the comet of 1577 had described round the sun an arc of a circle including within it the orbits of Mercury and Venus. Herelius, in spite of his erroneous notions respecting the nature of comets, first discovered that the curves in which they moved were parabolic in their nature; but he appears to have known nothing—a grand and vital omission—of the place occupied by the sun within those curves, nor of the laws which governed the velocities of those bodies as they approached the summits of their parabolas.

It was an immense step when an astronomer dared predict that a given comet, which he had observed, would one day return—a still greater when he ventured to fix an epoch for its appearance when he would not himself survive to witness the fact. And our interest in the comets whose periodical return is well established increases with their increasing number. There appears no reason why this number should not augment with a rapidity comparable to the quickly successive discoveries of the telescopic planets circulating between Mars and Jupiter. At present we are acquainted with eight comets which have come back to visit us once or several times, after their return had been announced as probable in consequence of the circumstances of their previous arrivals. M. Delaunay, in the *Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes* for 1872, gives sundry historical details, which we propose to abridge, relating to the discovery of the periodicity of those eight comets.

The most important of these in the annals of astronomy is Halley's comet. It is the first whose periodicity was ascertained, and its period of revolution is the longest known. Very remarkable also was the clue which led to its identification, as

well as its reappearance, predicted by our illustrious countryman fifty-four years beforehand. So proud was the Oxford professor of his discovery, that he begs posterity (now our ancestors) to remember that it was due to an Englishman.

Edmund Halley calculated the elements of his comet's orbit at its perihelium passage in 1682, when it blazed in the heavens with wonderful splendour. He found that orbit to correspond exactly with those of the comets of 1531 and 1607, which led him to conclude that all the three were one and the same individual, making, in 1682, its third public appearance on the stellar stage. These three returns of the same comet gave it a period of revolution of about seventy-five years and a half, with a variation which might amount to two years. This incertitude did not prevent Halley from predicting its return in 1758.

Capini was the first to conceive the idea of searching the records of ancient observations for the orbits of comets, with a view to their possible return. If it had occurred to him to refer their motions to the sun's attraction, and to consider the sun as their centre, he would have made an enormous step in advance. He employed the most delicate processes then known to astronomy to ascertain when comets would reappear, but he had no means of verifying his predictions, because the resemblances which he thought he found in comets were only apparent. He ought to have compared their motions by referring them to the sun's influence. Halley was the first astronomer to adopt this grand principle, and he signally succeeded in consequence. His method led to the important conclusion that comets are veritable planets. Their movements, which appear extremely irregular, are not so when referred to the sun. The difference between them (considered as members of the solar system) lies in the form of the orbits they describe, and which, instead of being almost round, like those of the planets, are extremely long ovals, which is the reason why we lose sight of them during such lengthened intervals of time.

We have seen that there was a margin of about two years left open for the comet's return. It was an allowance made for the action of the planets on the comet's course. The exact amount of that action was difficult to determine. Nevertheless, Clairaut set to work to calculate it, in confirmation of his enthusiastic faith in the Newtonian system, which was not universally admitted

then by the world called "learned," as it now is. "The comet we are expecting," he said, in the public sitting of the Académie des Sciences, on the 14th of November, 1758, "has become the object of much greater interest than the public usually bestow on astronomical questions. The true lovers of science desire its return, because the result will be a brilliant confirmation of a system (Newton's) in whose favour every phenomenon gives evidence. Those, on the contrary, who delight to see philosophers plunged in trouble and uncertainty, hope that it will not come back, and that the discoveries of Newton and his partisans will fall to the level of other hypotheses, which are the offspring of mere imagination."

Undaunted by this scepticism and opposition, which we can hardly understand at the present day, he traced the constellations it would traverse, and the planets it would meet with on its way, and found that Saturn would retard its arrival by one hundred days, and Jupiter by five hundred and eighteen—in all by six hundred and eighteen; that is, this revolution of the comet would be a year and eight months longer than the previous one. In other words, its passage at its perihelion would take place about the middle of April, 1759, within a month, more or less.

Never had a scientific prophecy excited greater curiosity from one end of Europe to the other. The comet did reappear; it followed the path through the constellations which Clairaut had traced for it; it reached its perihelion on the 12th of March, 1759, just a month before the date indicated. We may note that the difference between theory and observation might be caused by the action of the planets Uranus and Neptune, of which (as he did not know of their existence) Clairaut could take no account in his calculations.

It was a grand triumph for the Newtonians. "We have all witnessed the accomplishment of the event," wrote Lalande, who had rendered great assistance in the calculations; "so that it is placed beyond a doubt that comets are really planets which turn like the others round the sun. M. Clairaut demanded a month's grace in favour of theory, and the month's grace has not been exceeded. The comet came, after a period of five hundred and eighty-six days longer than its preceding period, that is, thirty-two days before the appointed date. But what is thirty-two days for the various attractions

of the solar system of which we have been unable to take account—for the comets of whose situation and strength we are ignorant—for the resistance of the ethereal matter, which we are incompetent to appreciate, and for the numerous quantities which we are obliged to neglect in an approximative calculation? The difference of five hundred and eighty-six days between two revolutions of the same comet—a difference produced by the disturbing forces of Jupiter and Saturn—is a more striking demonstration than one could have hoped to obtain of the grand principle of universal gravity. It places the law amongst the number of fundamental physical truths, of whose reality it is no more possible to doubt than it is of the bodies which produce attraction."

Halley's comet was again due in 1835. M. Damoiseau, taking into account the disturbance to be caused by Uranus, fixed its perihelic passage for the 4th of November of that year. Another astronomer, M. de Pontecoulant, predicted for the 13th (according to M. Delaunay); but M. Leconturier states that M. de Pontecoulant's calculation gave the 15th of November, at midnight, as the date. The comet really passed the point of its orbit nearest to the sun at nine o'clock in the morning of the 16th of November, thus failing to keep the rendezvous given it by so brief a delay as nine short hours. As the anxious expectant was aware of its coming, he probably waited patiently, for astronomy can boast of but few more brilliant feats than this.

According to the same gentleman's calculations, twenty-seven thousand two hundred and seventeen days must elapse between the comet's departure from its perihelion in 1835 and its next arrival at that point of its orbit; this calculation appoints the 24th of May, 1910, for that interesting phenomenon to come off. The arithmetic which hangs about Halley's comet in groups of figures, inconceivable by unlearned minds, informs us that for thirty-eight years it travels in our direction from the extreme limits of our solar system to a point distant about forty-eight millions of miles from the sun; that it then retreats rapidly, and thirty-eight years afterwards, leaving Uranus behind it, reaches Neptune's orbit, about three thousand millions of miles from the sun. These figures are far too enormous to convey any definite idea of distance; but it would be easy to calculate how many years it would take a

racehorse to gallop round this course from the starting point, its perihelion, back again to the winning-post, the perihelion also.

So much for the comet's excursions into space. It was natural to trace it back retrospectively into the night of ages. The result has been to establish, with more or less certainty, that our coy visitant has been detected, at sundry intervals agreeing with the periods required, up to October of the year 12, B.C.

Encke's comet, named after the calculator of its elements, completes its revolution in about three years and a half. Discovered in 1818 by M. Pons, at Marseilles, it was suspected to be identical with a comet observed in 1805, which suspicion was confirmed by Encke. Regarding merely the rapidity of its successive returns, this object might be considered a planet; but it has been left on the list of comets, both on account of the appearances it presents, and because it is not visible to us throughout the whole course of its orbit.

The most noteworthy point about Encke's comet results from a comparison of the dates of its successive returns to the same point of its orbit. Making every possible allowance for the disturbing forces exercised on it by the planet's attraction, Encke found that the period of its revolution is constantly diminishing, which would indicate the presence of a resisting medium—that interstellar space is not a vacuum, but is filled with an ether possessing some density, however slight. Such a medium, by gradually checking the comet's velocity, would cause it to yield to the sun's attraction; its orbit, contracting more and more, would be run through in shorter and shorter periods of time. Encke's comet was last seen in November, 1871.

Biela's comet (with a period of six years and three quarters) is another instance of fantastic resemblance between the largest and the smallest works of the Creator. There are microscopic plants and animals (examples, closterium and trichoda) which, after attaining a certain age, contract in the middle, become fiddle-shaped, hour-glass-shaped, and finally separate into two independent, thrifty individuals. Microscopists call this process "fissiparous multiplication." But who would suppose that a comet would ever adopt that mode of increase? Nevertheless, Biela's has, beyond the possibility of doubt, done so. Discovered in 1826, seen again in 1832, it could not be observed in 1839 in consequence of the unfavourable position of its orbit at the

time of its perihelic passage. But in 1846, astronomers, without any reproach to their sobriety, saw it double. It was two comets, travelling side by side, with a tendency rather to quit than to approach each other. The quarrel, too, had come on suddenly; shortly before its complete accomplishment, such observers as Maury, of Washington, and Challis, of Cambridge (England), declare that they saw no symptoms of the separation. The disunited couple are expected back in the autumn of 1872, and we shall be curious to see whether they have made it up, and behave as becomes their high position.

After this specimen of eccentricity, the other return comets are valuable rather as increasing the list of periodicals than for any special interest they offer to the general reader. There is Faye's comet, with a period of seven years and a half, discovered at the Paris Observatory in 1843. M. le Verrier, calculating the perturbations it would experience on its way, fixed its perihelic passage for the 3rd of April, 1851, a little after midnight. The prediction, wonderfully exact, was fulfilled on the 2nd of April, about ten in the morning. The same comet was seen again in 1858 and 1865. It ought to show itself once more in 1873.

Brorsen's, with a period of five years and a half, discovered at Kiel in 1846, is a more slippery comet than the preceding. It was searched for in vain in 1851, but found again in 1857. Similarly, in 1862, it was not forthcoming, but was detected again in 1868. Doubtless Astronomer Brorsen is himself more punctual than the untrustworthy vagabond who bears his name.

D'Arrest's comet, discovered at Leipzig in 1851, has a period of six and a half years nearly. Its return was announced for the end of 1857; but as it would not be visible in the earth's northern hemisphere, the documents, and, if we may say so, its passport, prepared by M. Yvon Villarceau, were sent to observatories in the southern hemisphere in anticipation of its arrival. The result answered the French astronomer's predictions. The comet kept its appointment within twelve hours. In 1864 it gave no sign; but in 1870, on the 31st of August, it answered to its name.

On the 4th of January, 1858, Mr. Tuttle discovered a comet at Cambridge, United States. Tuttle's comet has a period of revolution of something more than thirteen years and a half. It was recognised at Marseilles by M. Borelly, in October, 1871. Finally,

Winnecke's comet was discovered by its godfather, also in 1858, at the Bonn Observatory. Its period is five years and a half, and is believed to be identical with the third comet of 1819. After 1858 it contrived to elude observation for awhile, but was caught by Winnecke himself on the 9th of April, 1869. On the 30th of June following, it slipped round the perihelic corner and got out of the way, leaving us to lay telescopes on it by-and-bye if we can.

Whatever harm comets may have done by frightening half-witted people out of their intellectual remnant, comet wines have in some slight measure made up for it. M. Babinet tells us that we may further improve their errors. The perturbations of Encke's comet have helped us to weigh the planet Mercury. By-and-bye we shall verify the weight already assigned to the earth by the irregularities of Biela's comet. Faye's will one day tell us the mass of Mars. And, lastly, the hope is held out to us that the comets which traverse the circumsolar regions will reveal to us, by their unsteady march, the existence and quantity of chaotic matter which circulates with the planets round our central star and supplies the meteoric masses known as *aërolites*.

THE MODERN TANTALUS.

I ACQUIRED this singular soubriquet among my friends from the following adventure.

Our friend Bricker Bracker is well known as being the possessor of a lodge situated in a deliciously sequestered locality, but, according to Sydney Smith's measure of inconvenient distance, much more than "five miles from a lemon." This was really a drawback to his abundantly proffered hospitality, as the nearest railway station, village inn, public-house, or human habitation, was at least eight miles away. But if there was this drawback in the case of the lodge, there was the advantage that it was so luxuriously victualled, so stored with the choicest wines, spirits, beers, &c., that a band of epicureans might ask for nothing better than to stand a month's siege there, and be regularly beleaguered.

Bricker Bracker, indeed, prided himself on his cellars, where, in bins well lit and comfortably warmed, slept veteran bottles of Bordeaux and Burgundy, keeping each other comfortable, wrapped in what seemed

their fur paletôts, made of thick cobwebs and mould. Another weakness of our friend Bracker was his taste in glass; his flasks, decanters, and glasses were all of the choicest kind. His theory was that a noble vintage should be nobly received, and that, as a lord used to be entitled to be hanged with a silken rope, so should a nobly-born vintage be carried to its doom in the most elegant vessels. He used to say, also, that the system of introducing black bottles which epicures affected was too plebeian; you missed the rich purple and all the glories of the grape; and thus it was that his sideboard and the shelves of his cabinet were lined with flasks and bottles, each exquisitely engraved all over with trees, and birds, and flowers—marvels of workmanship. But this did not exhaust the special tastes of Bricker Bracker. His gem of a house was fitted with all kinds of mechanical devices for saving trouble; the bells were electric, everything was done by machinery, and the quantity of labels all about the house, with the word "patent" inscribed, was inconceivable. He was, indeed, a species of modern Sir Abel Handy. Every guest had in his dressing-room a sort of simple telegraph, six little knobs, inscribed "clothes," "hot water," "fire out," "coffee," "boots," "spirits." Beside these, was a little door, which would fly open, discovering a tiny lift, which brought up the article wanted. All this was in the view of dispensing with servants, of whom our friend had a sort of horror. He said they broke his glass, and destroyed property generally, and he hoped soon, with improved machinery, to dispense with all but one or two. His apparatus for uncorking bottles was of singular ingenuity, and he had adapted a recent invention—a sort of screw-stopper, with a key, which has recently come into use—as a protection against the peculations of domestics, and as also useful in keeping the precious juice air-tight.

The world was naturally curious about this little ménage, and people were eager to be asked down. But Major Philips, however, a rather sneering officer, who had spent his life in "fudging about," and, with his wife, trying to get meat, drink, and quarters gratuitously, was almost snarling in his condemnation of the system.

"All this machinery is shabbiness and stinginess," he said. "The man wants to save. While you are staring at and admiring his devices, he is starving you. Depend upon it, though his bottles are fine,

the wine he puts in them is poor. It's all stinginess, I know. Cogs and wheels cost very little, for they eat nothing; men and women cost a great deal, for they do."

It was in vain to argue with this sceptic; that I assured him that Bricker Bracker was the most generous and lavish of men; nothing would convince him, and he went about describing the thing as a good joke, contemptuously holding up my friend to ridicule for this elaborate system of stinginess. Somehow, Philips always contrived to be right in his bitter publicly expressed opinions, or to have the appearance of being so, which amounts to the same thing; and on this occasion was to prove equally right, or have the appearance of right, to my confusion. The adventure was as follows:

Our Bricker Bracker sent out invitations for a choice little party of ten, who were to come down and stay the night of the feasting with him. Major Philips was with me at the time; and I turned on him triumphantly. "Now," I said, "I know Bracker sufficiently well to ask him to let me bring a friend to his house; and he knows me sufficiently well to agree to such a proposition. I will bring you if you like, and then you will see how ill-founded and even ungenerous is your judgment."

This was putting him in an ingenious state of embarrassment, as it would put him to proof, as it were, of his assertions, or make him accept a hospitality he had spoken of so contemptuously. But the selfish cynicism of Philips was unassailable.

"I shall go," he said, "because I owe it to myself, and it will give you a lesson. Mark my words, the whole thing will break down."

I said we should see.

On the very morning of the day on which the festival was to take place, a telegram was brought in. Again Philips was with me at the time. "What did I tell you?" he said. I opened it with dreadful misgivings. It was not a put off. But it went very near it. Bracker had been summoned away "to the bedside of a sick aunt."

"Has money, of course," said Philips. "No one would go to a sick aunt pure and simple, still less to a sick aunt's bedside."

But Bracker wrote, he had left everything ready for the dinner—the wines all ranged on the sideboard, ready for drinking. Key would be sent by post. "But take care of my glass. I must not find even a scratch on my precious decanters."

"There!" I cried, "is that the telegram of an inhospitable man?"

"I don't know," said Philips, "the whole looks to me more fishy than ever. Asked to dine, and the first thing is, the host flies! However, you shall see, my boy."

We drove down in great spirits, mustering seven at the least. Arrived at the lodge we were received by the single servant in charge—an excellent cook—and were shown to our rooms. There each brought all the mechanical resources into play, trying this button and that for "hot water," "boots," &c., and all working admirably. When we came down the servant brought me and Philips into the dining-room, and the most elegant appetising sight met our gaze. A choice little round table was laid out with exquisite taste, and on the shelf of the little sideboard were ranged, I suppose, at least a dozen decanters of the most elegant shapes, each engrossed over with birds, beasts, landscapes, &c., and each already in possession of the rich juice that was to recruit us.

"Well," I said to the sceptic, "what do you say now? Here is," reading the silver labels round the neck of each, "Amontillado, Chateaufneuf de Pape, Clos Vougeot, '57 claret, port, and your own favourite, some noted old East India Madeira. What do you say now?"

"Wait a little," he said, coolly. "When it is in our glasses time enough for all that."

I could have retorted that even when good wine had reached Mr. Philips's interior, he had been known to reserve his gratitude, but I held my peace. On another corner shelf we found liqueurs and cognacs, prime old Scotch and Irish whiskies, and a silver punch-bowl, of old repoussé pattern, with lemon and sugar, in the correct quantity, lying at the bottom. A neatly written card exhibited minute directions for quantities; a lemon-squeezer, one of the most ingenious bits of machinery, lay beside it, and also a little engine for shaving off the peel. All these incitements whetted the appetites of our party, who were many-bottle men, excellent connoisseurs, and protested they never were in such vein.

Dinner was served, sent up by the lift; we waited on ourselves. We were sharp set, and some one suggested a glass all round of the particular old cognac. I got up myself to fetch the precious cordial. In fact, I was to act as my friend's deputy. "This," I said, holding it up to the light, "I know to be of immense value, and was

sold, I believe, at Prince Talleyrand's death. It is the softest and most delicious spirit you ever tasted. Prepare!"

"Help it round," said Philips, "and don't be like an auctioneer."

"Ah," I said, "gentlemen, would you believe it that there is one amongst us who is sceptical as to human hospitality, who requires proof, real proof? Well, it shall be furnished; but I warn that person, that when he shall have filled himself with the excellent vintages, of which he is unworthy, I shall call on him for an honourable avowal and retraction."

The cork did not come out, at least would not receive the corkscrew; when looking at it closer I perceived it to be one of the mechanical corks, which are screwed up tight with a key. "A wise precaution," I said; "this keeps out the air thoroughly." I rang the bell, or rather called down to the attendant through the tube, bidding her send up the key. The reply came promptly that master always kept it himself, and had said he would send it to me by post. Philips burst into a sneering laugh.

"Never mind the cognac," said a stout, jovial guest. "We'll do with the old West India. I never can eat a morsel unless I stimulate with a preparatory glass."

"Nor I," "Nor I," said other voices, with the unanimity of the chorus in William Tell.

"The West India will, in fact, be better," said I, "collaring" that bottle; "we—will—why," I faltered, "why this fellow is corked in the same way. Good gracious! Surely, they cannot all have been——"

I seized the flasks unwillingly one after the other. In the neck of every one, with one exception, had been inserted one of these terrible inventions, each screwed down only too satisfactorily. All the same—West India, Clos Vougeot, claret, "LL," not a bottle thus untreated! All the guests leaped frantically to their feet, for much was involved; their palates were inflamed with anticipation, and each was execrating the vile brass mechanism that shut off the precious fluids. We had the cook up in a moment.

"Where's the key?" was shouted at him desperately. "The key! The key!"

"It was sent to this gent by post. I saw it myself put up."

"I never got it!" I said, despairingly, "I give you my honour, never! But there is another—you can get another?"

"There were but one," said the cook,

phlegmatically, "which he kep' by his watch-chain—one hopen's all."

"Well, send for one."

"Can't be got nearer than London, ten miles there and ten miles back. And the shops would be all shut."

We looked at each other; never were there such despairing faces. Though the soup was served, every one stood up and every one had a bottle, frantically examining it, and as frantically making attempts with prongs of forks and the like. But the workmanship was too secure. What was to be done?

"Oh, this won't do, you know," said the oldest of the party. "I shall be ill if I don't have my drink. We must only knock the necks off."

This solution was hailed with delight, and blessings were showered on his head. But the cook at once interfered.

"Excuse me, gents," he said, promptly, though ungrammatically, "them things is all in my charge, and my master values 'em more than he does his money. He said there wasn't to be a scratch on 'em, and I'll take care there shan't be. No, if that's your line, gents, beg pardon, but they'd best be out of harm's way." With this he hurriedly gathered them up, and putting them safely back on the shelf, stood on guard before them.

The miserable night that followed was really indescribable. We were gloomy and furious. Who could eat, or even speak? The only diversion was the spectacle of men going restlessly over to make one more experiment on the wretched flasks. Were it the contriving something, in a critical case, where life was concerned, more ingenuity could not have been exhibited. Men became transformed into engineers and mechanicians. Strange complications with penknives were attempted; but the patentee had done his work too well. We turned with disgust from the dishes; some got up and walked about the room. Then we all quarrelled. The worst was the triumph of Philips, who said that he had suspected it all along. Nothing could clear me. It was pronounced, on the motion of Philips, to be the most ingeniously "stingy" trick ever perpetrated, and that Bricker Bracker, with his machineries and "tomfoolery," was the meanest of mankind. As for me, I was acquitted on the uncomplimentary grounds of "weakness of intellect."

"Only let it be a lesson to you for the future," said Philips. "Let him humbug you as much as he pleases, but see that he

does not use you as a mechanical engine to humbug other people."

The only thing for it was to order our two carriages and return sorrowfully to town—every one abusing *me*. It was then they were good enough to confer on me the name of Tantalus, or "Tanty" for short.

THE HERALD OF SUMMER.

I HEAR a gush of melody, I see a flush of green,
So I know the Summer's coming with the glory of a queen;

For Spring, her welcome herald, has proclaimed it far and wide,
Since the throne of Winter toppled, and the stern old despot died.

Spring has spread o'er moor and mountain a carpet for her feet,
Silver daisy, golden king-cup, purple orchis, cowslip sweet;

Bade the trees unfold a canopy of undulating shade,
Where anemone and violet their woodland home have made.

Pale narcissus and faint daffodil whisper of her by the well,
Where ferns bend o'er the primrose lest she the secret tell;

But hyacinth and harebell ring the tidings boldly out,
For the breeze to catch the echoes, and answer with a shout.

The busy brooklets, listening, have turned the theme to song,

And sing it to the sedges as they gently glide along;
The mountain streams, no longer dumb, join in the joyous lay,
And leaping o'er their rocky bounds laugh out in sparkling spray.

Glad butterflies are fluttering like banners in the air,
Rich flowers hold up their nectaries and offer incense rare,

The toiling bee hums cheerily, the gnats dance in the sun,

The very frogs croak gleefully o'er Springtide life begun.

No need the tardy cuckoo's note to gossip of the Spring,
Whilst other warblers' tuneful throats have a prophetic ring;

And orchards white with cherry-snow, through which blooms apple-blush,
Bring dreams of Summer fruitage to the birdlings in the bush.

Spring is here! and Summer's coming, with a coronal of light!

For the skylark, like a courtier, has winged his upward flight,

The first to meet Queen Summer in her golden car of state,

And salute her with his anthem close to her palace gate.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE BRITISH LEGION IN SPAIN.

IN the year 1835, Don Carlos, brother of the recently deceased King Ferdinand, announced his claim to the Spanish throne, and headed an armed insurrection against the Queen Regent and the child-queen, Isabella, in the Basque provinces.

The claims of Don Carlos rested on the fact, that by the national Salic law no

woman could wear the Spanish crown. This ancient and hitherto inviolable law had been arbitrarily cancelled and set aside by the poor priest-ridden, half-idiotic king, without the necessary consent of the Cortes and the nation. This step he had been induced to take by the intrigues of his wife's lovers and her Jesuit priests. The Biscayans, brave, proud, and independent, supported Don Carlos, because he had promised to restore their fueros, or local rights, and exemption from taxation, of which the Queen Regent and the Christinos of the Madrid bureaux threatened, as it was reported, to deprive them. Agile, hardy, fond of war, the Biscayans defended their glens and mountain-side farms with indomitable courage, and the Queen Regent, soon finding that her southern Spaniards could do little against them, looked towards England—Spain's old ally—for aid.

Lieutenant-General Sir G. De Lacy Evans, a brave and restless Peninsular officer, at once set to work, with his usual fire and energy, to organise a British Legion. By the advice of the Privy Council, William the Fourth, on the 10th of June, 1835, issued an order, permitting any English subject to enrol himself in such Legion for the term of two years, and the recruits were armed and accoutred from the Tower of London. In spite of party hatred of Sir De Lacy Evans, as a well-known reformer, there can be no doubt that the Legion was formed of good average men, chiefly young agricultural labourers, eager to rival the deeds of their fathers, starved-out hand-loom weavers from the west of Scotland, and Irish peasants, with a slight, and, indeed, unavoidable infusion of London vagabonds and thieves.

This auxiliary force, slandered with such bitter and untiring malice by the English Conservatives, consisted of two regiments of cavalry, six regiments of infantry, and some artillery. The cavalry included the Reina Isabel Lancers and the Queen's Own Irish Lancers. The infantry comprised the First Regiment (yellow facings), the Fourth Westminster Grenadiers (white facings), the Sixth, or Scotch Grenadiers, the Eighth Highlanders (red facings), the Consolidated Royal Irish, and the Rifle Corps (green and red facings).

The Reverend Mr. Farr, in a book on the Carlist war, has admirably sketched the contrast between the two parties. "See," he says, "the lightly armed Carlist soldier. Helmet he has none; not a strap or bit of leather of any kind has he to en-

cumber him. On his head he wears a small, light, round cloth cap of the country, which has been for a long time, and is even now, a fashionable head-dress with English ladies; only, when a woman wears it, it is generally made of silk or velvet. For uniform, he has a plain metal button, on a grey cloth frock-coat, and a pair of linen or cloth trousers, but there is little uniformity in the colour of the coat or trousers, as it depends entirely on what the Jews at Bayonne can smuggle over the French frontier. He is armed with a musket, and his cartridge-pouch, or *canana*, as they call them, being fixed round his body with a strap, it rather supports than fatigues him. Not one man in five appeared to me to encumber himself with even a scabbard for his bayonet; in the strap by which he fixes his *canana* round his waist, he would make a hole, and in that stick the bayonet. On their feet they had sometimes shoes, but oftener the string-made sandal of their country—*aspargartas*—which travellers, who have been no further than the baths of *Bagnères de Bigorre*, or *De Luchon*, in the French Pyrenees, must have observed was worn by their mountain guides in preference to the shoe. While the poor fellows of the Legion—heavily and stiffly armed with their sack-clad backs, and a dangling strap over their shoulders, to hold their cartridge-pouch, and another to hold their bayonet—are panting, sighing, and almost dropping from exhaustion, scarce able to move for want of breath, either when attacking or pursuing the enemy—the Carlist soldier, the bravest, the most terrible, the most active mountain enemy in the world, lightly equipped, and with no encumbrances, with impunity attacks or retreats, as best suits his inclination, from his heavy-clad foes, with a consciousness of superiority which he is not wrong in possessing. With what perfect contempt do the Carlists treat their enemies! They can allow themselves to be apparently surrounded, and when there is just one little open corner left, they run off at last, dashing up the mountains, without ever losing a man; while artillery, cavalry, and every engine of war is of no avail. The only thing a Carlist fears is to be caught on a high road, or level ground, where cavalry can act, or be exposed in the fields to spherical shells, for as they burst in the air, they shoot backwards and forwards, right and left, upwards and downwards; but it is the power of backward firing that utterly disconcerts them,

as getting behind a tree, parapet, or barricade, not only gives them no protection, but makes them a surer mark. It is exactly this hide-behind-something warfare which they delight in, from which they can either pounce on their enemy or spring away from him, as best suits their purpose."

The real fighting commenced at San Sebastian, on May the 5th, 1836. The Carlists had stretched a double cordon of fortifications from the river *Urumea* on the east, to a deep glen which opened on the sea one hundred miles to the west; within that enclosure were some villages, with their tributary orchards and vineyards sprinkled over the heights, a great many scattered houses, and many small fields surrounded by stone walls. These fortifications began about a half a mile from San Sebastian. The defences were ditch-banks, deep cut lanes, breastworks, barricades of barrels filled with earth; moreover, all the farm-houses were viciously loopholed for musketry.

The main road from San Sebastian to Hernani, intersecting the ground, was barricaded in various places, and the heights behind, here and there broken by hollows, were intrenched for cannon. Altogether it was a nasty place. Although part of the Fourth, six companies of the Eighth, and some Spaniards from Santander, had not yet arrived, General Evans, with his usual gallantry, resolved not to wait for reinforcements, but instantly to attack with his mere handful of five thousand raw troops, and fifteen hundred Spaniards. On the 4th, orders came to the field-officers to prepare for a desperate attack the next morning, and the commanding officers harangued their men. Colonel Fortescue said to his regiment of Rifles:

"Neither give nor take quarter; you will be fighting with savages, who will kill all prisoners, so stand to the last man against them."

This rather vague and somewhat savage order was understood by the men to only warn the young soldiers not to surrender to the ferocious Carlists.

It was all bustle that night in San Sebastian, says Sergeant Somerville, the intelligent eye-witness to whose memoir we shall be largely indebted. At one A.M. the regiments began to muster. It was a dark, wet morning, and the roads were heavy for the advance.

"Close up, cover your files, and be silent," was the order of the officers of companies.

At three A.M. the regiments passed through the town gate. General Reid, with the Light Brigade, consisting of the Rifles, the Third, Sixth, and the Chapelgorris, took the right of the enemy's lines towards the river Urimea. The Irish Brigade (Seventh, Ninth, and Tenth), under General Shaw, took the centre, moving towards the St. Bartoleme Convent, while General Chichester's Brigade (First Regiment, and part of the Eighth, and about eight hundred Spaniards) pushed at the enemy's left. The first Carlist outposts were some two hundred yards beyond the convent. The general's orders were to advance as close as possible and then charge at once with the bayonet. At the convent the two brigades were to fan out, and diverge from the centre for the simultaneous attack. Through the humid gloom the Carlist's picket-fires could be seen glaring; the English advanced silently, waiting with held breath for the word that was to let slip the dogs of war. All at once a Carlist sentry shouted: "Qui vive!"

"Chapelgorri! Carajo," was the reply of a Christino, the sound of a musket broke the treacherous stillness, and the sentry fell back dead.

"Forward," cried every commanding officer. Bang, bang, volley after volley, went picket after picket of the Carlists. General Evans pushed on first of all; aides-de-camp began to dash about for orders; a few men fell dead. As daylight began to show each side their opponents, it became necessary here and there to halt, for the defences were formidable to so small a force, however brave. The hot-blooded Chapelgorris, wild to get at the Carlists, and not well disciplined, fired with or without order at the slightest opening. The Seventh Irish, led by Shaw, doggedly brave, pressed forward through a hot fire, the column melting away as it advanced, but still returning no shot till it stormed over stone walls into the Windmill battery, where the five hundred loopholes had each a fierce Carlist behind it. In and about these houses the Carlists, stubbornly meeting the Seventh, bayonet to bayonet, fell in great numbers, and eventually gave way.

"You are doing nobly, Irishmen," said General Evans, riding up.

The first line of fortifications had now given way, but the worst remained. Five pieces of cannon roughly welcomed the assailants of the strongly intrenched redoubt of Lugariz, and to seize it was no joking matter. The Rifles, in the mean

time, had done their work, and cleared the posts opposing them. Colonel Tupper, charging on his regiment, was shot through the arm, but he hid the bleeding limb in his cloak, and led his regiment for two hours longer. Almost exhausted by loss of blood he was still facing a heavy fire when he was shot in the head.

"Tell the regiment," he said, as he was dying fast, "that I can no longer command them, but that they are fit to be commanded by any one that will fight at their side."

Colonel Fortescue of the Rifles, "Mad Fortescue," as he was called, a brave and reckless officer, although he was wounded early in the engagement, fought several times hand to hand with the Carlists. With his green sleeves turned up, he pushed through bushes, and over walls, now up to his knees in a ditch, now dragging his men through a dyke, till his clothes were nearly torn off him. The Seventh and Eighth were repulsed in three charges, and lost many men. At last a party of the Tenth came to reinforce them. Old Colonel Fitzgerald leading them, riding whip in hand, leaped over a low stone wall. Volley after volley battered down the men, and all the officers of the three regiments, excepting the old colonel, fell. He stood there almost alone among the spluttering Carlists' bullets, shouting:

"Irishmen — Tenth, Ninth, Seventh! Munster boys! bog-trotters! ragamuffins! Come on with old Charley" (his pet name in his regiment). "I'll stand here by myself till I'm shot, if ye don't come on."

Many soldiers fell dead as he spoke, and some of the wounded were again struck; but the moment he had uttered the last words, an Irishman cried, "By me shoul! an' ye'll not die by yourself, old Charley," and he cleared the wall. The whole regiment followed like deer, and, bayonets down, instantly charged. Many officers and men fell here (wounded); amongst the former Capt. C. Thompson of the Ninth, "a gallant, thorough-going fellow."

Now commenced the attacks over the slippery, steep hill-sides on the fort of Lugariz; but in several attempts the Legion was repulsed. In the very nick of time, the Phoenix and Salamander bore full sail into the bay with the Fourth and Eighth Regiments. Hurrah! off darted the boats, down crowded the soldiers into them; and the moment they touched the shore, off went the knapsacks on the sand in the care of a guard.

"Come on, you grenadiers," said old Colonel Godfrey, "and you little beggars in the other companies there, come on, and we'll soon let them see they haven't got it all to themselves."

General Evans soon came up, and shook hands with the old colonel, and told him he was just in time.

"Scotchmen!" he cried, addressing the new arrivals, "you will not have much to do, but I know you will be proud to share the glory with the Sixth Regiment. Your countrymen are carrying everything before them."

By this time the Phoenix and the other vessels had anchored close to the shore, and were opening a tremendous cannonade, with terrible effect, on the fort of Lugariz, sixteen hundred yards distant. Round one more corner, and the Eighth and Fourth would be under fire.

"Push on, never mind who falls," cried Godfrey. "The whole—attention! with cartridge, prime and load. Not one fire a shot till he is ordered. Silence in the centre there—silence! Fix bayonets, carry your arms at the short trail. Companies will follow in succession from the right. Grenadiers, right face—march! Right wheel—double!"

And round the corner they swung, through a storm of bullets, and with rockets darting overhead, or knocking holes in the Spanish lines. The heavy cannon of the vessels soon smashed down a corner of the redoubt, and a thirteen-inch shell bursting just inside the breach, and scattering the Spaniards, Lugariz was taken at the rush. Adjutant Alley of the Fourth, scaling another part of the fort wall, was left alone, the men who followed being all killed or tumbled back. A pistol-shot from a Carlist officer stretched Alley dead just as the other regiments poured in through the breach. A corporal named Oakley rushed at the Carlist officer, who was just snatching up a loaded musket from a dead soldier, and first stabbed and then shot him. The Christino guerillas in this action were often seen tearing wounded men with their teeth.

Just as the second line of defence was nearly carried, General Shaw had, with the Seventh Regiment, to attack a fortified and intrenched house. Two companies of the Eighth backed up the somewhat fatigued men of the Seventh, already much shattered by charges on strong posts held by the enemy. At the first shower of bullets they hesitated. General Shaw, in his usual

stern way, at once thundered out: "Halt! The Seventh shall not have the honour of going—they hesitate." Then turning to the other detachment he said: "Mitchell and Hogg, move up with those companies of the Eighth, take that house from the enemy, and let nothing prevent you."

Majors Mitchell and Hogg, two very brave and beloved officers, with Captain Larkham and Lieutenant Fiske, instantly led their men against the house, which was blazing from a hundred loopholes, and wreathed with sulphureous smoke. Mitchell and Hogg almost immediately fell severely wounded, but they lay among the dead waving their swords and cheering the men on. Soon after Larkham and Fiske also fell, and about one-half of the non-commissioned officers and privates also shed their blood before that fatal stronghold. Eventually some companies of the Irish Brigade carried the place with great loss. In one unsuccessful attack many of the English wounded were left under the cruel fire of the Carlists, who were singling out the wounded. Two men of the Sixth lay on a ditch bank, trying to roll themselves into the ditch out of danger. A soldier with two broken legs was shot directly. The second man was a sergeant, and an officer offered any one a dollar who would venture out of cover and bring him in.

"I'll bring him here on my back," cried a soldier. "Hold my firelock some of ye, I'll soon let ye see me go for him."

The brave fellow had just got the wounded man in his arms when he was shot dead. Presently two more men ventured, one after the other, and were both killed. Soon after, the spot from whence the shots came was attacked and carried, and the sergeant saved.

Soon after this, Colonel Chichester and the Third Regiment took a resolutely defended post, where the Carlist chief, Segastibelza and his staff had hoisted a red flag, to signify "No quarter." Evans himself had been the first to mount the enemy's barricades sword in hand, and was often in the hottest of the fight. Colonel Woolridge, Lord William Paget, and others of his staff, were wounded close to him while he was leading an assault in person. Fourteen field-officers had already fallen, with upwards of twenty captains, forty subalterns, and five hundred and ninety-four rank and file.

The Carlists made their last stand at a point that Colonel Godfrey attacked.

"Come on, my brave fellows," he cried, "don't let those front regiments get all the praise—double, grenadiers."

"Hurrah, hurrah!" the whole regiment yelled, their pieces at the charge. A man beginning a second hurrah fell with a bullet in his head. The fellow behind him, tumbled over by a ball that struck the square brass plate of his side-belt, leaped up again, and marched on singing. The Carlists, rallying, opened a rattling fire on the advancing regiments. As Captain Shields was cheering his company, and crying, "Come on, my good fellows, come on," he was shot in his sword arm. His brother Robert, an ensign, dashed on, calling to the men to follow him and let his brother lie. The captain, binding up his arm, took his sword in his left hand, and said, "Let my arm go to mischief. My company will be the first to take the position, and I must be with them;" but faintness soon came on, and he had to be carried off the field. Corporal Oakley, at the moment the Carlists were recrossing a ditch, and beginning to rally, cried out, "So much for Buckingham" (a celebrated line of Edmund Kean's in *Richard the Third* then current), and shot dead a Carlist officer who was leading back his men. The orders were then given to go forward and storm a house. It was a farm on a hill-side, and many stone walls and ditches had to be cleared in the face of the Carlist fire. The two men of the Legion who first broke in were instantly shot, and the house became full of hot smoke, for the firing up and down stairs was incessant. The Chapelgorris as usual cruelly bayoneted all the Carlist wounded, and shot women without mercy. The search was keen for wine and money. Cows and fowls were soon despatched, and the chests and drawers broken open, fugitives hiding under beds or in barrels, were killed. The officers had to threaten the plunderers with death before they would desist. The bugles then sounded a recall, all the regiments were reformed, and a muster was made, to find out the killed, wounded, and missing. As General Evans rode past the regiments with clothes stained, wet, and torn, he was loudly cheered. He took off his hat as he trotted along, and continued remarking, "You have done well all of you; you have made a noble beginning." Parties of men were then sent out to cover up the dead, and to bring in the wounded. One poor fellow was found with twenty-nine bayonet wounds in him, the Carlists having tortured

him till they were driven away. On a beautiful budding day of May, when the swell of the long green wave rolling in from the Bay of Biscay was dying away unbroken on the shore, the officers who fell in this stubborn conflict were buried.

On the morning of the 28th there was more fighting. The river Urimea had to be crossed, but the bridge had been destroyed. General Chichester's Brigade (the Rifles, and the Tenth, Fourth, and Eighth Regiments), part of General Jarreguay's Division (the Chapelgorris, and two battalions of Spaniards), were ordered to ford through the strong current under cover of thirty pieces of cannon. This hot, simultaneous fire disordering the enemy, the English and Christinos dashed in and cleared the position at the point of the bayonet, and almost without firing a shot. In half an hour our nimble sailors had thrown over the swift river, one hundred and fifty yards wide, a strong and permanent pontoon bridge, which artillery, waggons, cavalry, and six men abreast, traversed to and fro for six months after. Lord John Hay captured an armed schooner and five pieces of artillery, and the town of Passages was that day occupied by the Legion. The Carlists were, by this conquest, cut off from all connexion with the sea in this direction, and they would have found this a very serious loss had not the French authorities often permitted them to pass military stores and ammunition.

The Legion, with the Chapelgorris and some of Jarreguay's regiments, now occupied the east bank of the Urimea, from the convent of Antigua, on the north-west, to the villages and heights of Alza, four or five miles distant, on the south-east. In the rear of Alza lay the town and port of Passages. The hills were covered with vineyards and corn-fields, the white cottages glittered amid fields of maize, wheat, and beans. Lord John Hay and General Evans were now hoping to push on to the frontier of France, and thus cut off the Carlists from all supplies from the province of Guipuscoa. To prevent this, and to revenge the recent defeat, the Carlist chief, Casa Eguia, resolved to attack the Legion, and, if possible, win back Passages.

On the morning of the 6th of June, 1836, the Carlists made a feint on the picket near the Ametzegana hill, a little to the left of the English centre, the real attack being intended for the village and fort of Alza, from whence Passages could have been commanded.

Three hours after sunrise the real attack commenced; the men, back in quarters, were sleeping or smoking, after their rough morning meal of wine and bread, when a cry ran through the town of "Turn out, turn out." The drums rattled, the bugles sounded everywhere—the "dressing call," the "turn out the whole," the "fall in," the "advance;" last of all, the ominous "double quick."

The soldiers grumbling, wrangling for their coats and muskets, hurried to the front, for smoke was rising in volumes in the direction of Alza. There the attack commenced. The First Regiment held the church and some loopholed houses. The Carlists, stealing up through an orchard, shot two sentries, and cut to pieces the picket, bayoneting the wounded, as usual, without mercy. A sentinel, who stood at the back of the church, had both his feet cut off by the first cannon-ball, and the same infernal shot, rebounding from the corner of the building, cut one of the Legion in two pieces, and carried off the arms of another. General Chichester, with his usual courage and skill, instantly lined the churchyard wall with the men of the First Regiment, and let fly his aides-de-camp for assistance. But the Carlist Navarrese regiments, the bravest and best soldiers of their party, advancing through a dreadful fire, forced their way through the fields, and, after a severe loss, wrested back the position from the First Regiment. One of the daring Navarrese officers, seeing General Chichester within reach, dashed at him, followed by others, and grappled with him as he rode. Chichester instantly shot one of his assailants dead, cut down, right and left, the two men who had clutched his bridle, darted from the rest, rallied the First Regiment, and, aided by reinforcements, retaliated terribly upon the Carlists.

The enemy had also attempted a simultaneous attack on the western extremity of the English lines, but soon retiring, General Evans ordered all his disposable troops round to defend the Ametzta, and retake the village and heights. In this fight the Chapelgorris rendered themselves especially conspicuous by their daring ferocity and revengeful cruelty. The Carlists and Christinos (the white and red caps) were, in many cases, known personally to each other, for they were nearly all Guipuscoan mountaineers, some of them relatives, a few even brothers.

"They met on the hill-side near Alza,"

says a spectator. "We, at some distance, but on rather higher ground, had faced the Navarrese, and were for a time kept back, while they also stood, checked by our fire. The ground was rough, woody, and intersected by numerous hedges, so that it was difficult to advance; but this enabled us to keep our ground the better against the numbers opposing us. The green sunny fields and the orchards of yesterday were now a blaze of fire and smoke. We saw the Chapelgorris driven back, and those in front of us, emboldened by that, made a strong onset to force us, but a heavy and steady fire scattered them on the earth as they came forward. The Chapelgorris rallied, and their opponents in turn retreated, the wounded being left lying. As the visitors came up with them the bayonets were dashed into dead bodies by those foremost, while others more leisurely put cartridges into the mouths of the wounded, and blew them up, pinned the bodies of two dying ones together by a bayonet, cut off heads, holding them up in the air to the enemy, and perpetrated other atrocities too horrible to be told. The retreat of the Carlists was but short. They retaliated the full measure of slaughter and barbarity that they had suffered, for the Chapelgorris were again compelled to give way. A few of these, being cut off in the corner of a field, could not by any possibility escape, and they were seen to close with their assailants. Shortly afterwards, on the ground being retaken, their bodies were found, but mixed with an almost equal number of Carlist dead. A Carlist officer was lying gasping, while an antagonist had seized him by the cheek with his teeth; the latter was dead, having been stabbed by the officer, but still held fast; and this was the cause of the Carlist's death, who, but for this, would have made his escape, not being otherwise wounded. This officer was immediately recognised by some of the Chapelgorris as the once powerful chief of a guerilla band, in which some of them had been subordinates. He had split the band in two at one time for a bribe, which caused them now to be on adverse sides, and the one who had seized him in the manner described had been second in command under him, had met him that day, was disarmed, but had wrestled with him, and thus played his part of the mutual revenge. There was an 'advance' sounding by our bugles. Two companies of the Sixth Regiment, with great bravery, joined the Chapelgorris, and, driving the enemy back

with considerable loss on both sides, took possession of part of the disputed ground. Our own and the other regiments of General Chichester's Brigade advanced also, and, after having gone forward for some distance against a heavy fire, there was a general charge made, and the Carlists, tremendously peppered by shot, and bayoneted in their retreat, abandoned their ground, and fell back on Alza. Perseverance on our side soon drove them from that position in like manner."

As the Carlists retreated they set fire to the houses, in order to deprive the Legion of shelter, and the English pressed forward in blinding darkness, the sound of the bugles alone directing them. The result of this was that the Fourth Regiment, mistaking the Eighth for the enemy, fired upon them in flank, and all but occasioned a retreat. Soon after this the Carlists again came on, headed this time, not only by their officers, but by two priests in full dress, holding aloft crucifixes, to incite the men against the accursed Protestants. All at once the gloom before them burst into lightning flashes, and volley after volley was poured on the Carlist front ranks. Many fell, others tumbled into ditches, scrambled through gaps, or leaped over walls.

"Forward—forward, men; fix bayonets," cried the maddened Christino officers; the bugles rang out the charge. "Viva!" shouted the frenzied Chapelgorris. A wild hurrah was given by the Legion, and the English bore forward like a red deluge. One of the luckless priests tore off his robe and shovel-hat, the other made for a hole in a bramble hedge, but stuck hopelessly among the thorns. As the poor old man kicked and sprawled in this dilemma, a huge Scotch grenadier pricked him behind with his bayonet, eager to strip him of his silver-buckled shoes, his silver cross, and ivory crucifix, swearing at him all the time, in a mixture of Scotch and broken Spanish oaths. Other men coming up, the grenadier, without ceremony, slipped off his reverence's shoes and put them on his own feet. The next man snatched the Carlist priest's silver spectacles and crucifix. Two others gutted his sash of all its dollars and pesetas, but no one offered him actual violence. The Carlists, just then rallying to rescue their priest from the foul heretics, were firmly withstood by the legionaries. At that moment a red-capped Chapelgorri coming up, cast his eye on the unfortunate half-

stripped priest. Shrieking an oath, he fired at the captive, and following the bullet with a savage bayonet thrust, he beat in the poor man's skull with the butt-end of his musket, leaped on the body, grinding his teeth, as he pounded down the head and breast-bone of the miserable ecclesiastic who had dared to doubt the legal right of the little Queen Isabella Segunda. Such is the ferocity of party warfare, such are the crimes for which the men of the brave British Legion were held accountable by their enemies.

Soon after this, Colonel Godfrey of the Eighth, dismounting from his horse to lead his men through a low-boughed orchard, the animal, by a slight retrograde movement of the regiment, was left half-way between a body of Carlists and Christinos. Two Carlists advancing to seize it were shot down. A party of six men of a light company of the Legion at once volunteered to fetch the horse. The moment, however, they left their cover, the Carlists fired a volley, and four out of the six fell dead.

"Let the brute alone," said Colonel Godfrey; "if he will stand there like a fool, let him. I'll not have my brave young boys shot for nothing."

A Chapelgorri then offered to go, and began bargaining about the number of dollars of the reward. Corporal Oakley (a brave fellow before mentioned) at once said:

"No Chapelgorri shall go, and leave me behind, afraid. If a Chapelgorri can venture for payment, I know who will do it for honour."

The moment Oakley started, the soldiers began betting against each other wine, bread, beef, tobacco, dollars and pesetas—he would or would not return with the prize. The bullets were already scattering the dust around Oakley's feet. He got hold of the horse, but the brute was fractious, and began to rear. More bets. Oakley fell, but only for a moment; the horse's rein had been cut through by a Carlist bullet. The regiment cheered as Oakley rose again, and the Carlists fired a fresh volley. This time a shot struck the horse, and luckily sent him scampering back towards his master, and Oakley, after having been exposed for nearly seven minutes to a continual fire from fifty of the enemy, returned back in safety.

A universal cheer rang through the woods as the bugles now again sounded the advance. The scene at this crisis is picturesquely described by our chief autho-

rity, Sergeant Somerville. "A deafening thunder of musketry," he says, "and the rushing roar of rockets blazing over our heads, drowned the hurrahs of the English and the vivas of the Spaniards. Some who hurrahed suddenly stopped, and fell down without a word. Some exclaimed, 'My leg!' 'my head!' 'my arm!' and were left behind to groan. The hedge-fows, and the fields, and the houses that had hitherto been lying clear from the smoke in the sun and the south wind, beyond where the battle had been, now emitted smoke and fire, while in our rear the strife was dying. Around us were the ill-fated dead and dying of the enemy, and the cheers and vivas of our own troops as we pushed on and drove back the retreating foe beyond the positions held by them previous to the attack on us in the morning. At a distance in front were the inhabitants hurrying off their cows and pigs; the elder children leading the younger; the mother with the babies, her sheets and shirts, hastening after them. The dusty coloured bakers who had been busily preparing the Carlist rations in some of the houses, were seen making their escape with each a bag of flour or bread, assisted by the retreating soldiers. Ours in turn shared the bread and the wine, and whatever could be had, as they came up to these houses. Some dared to advance further in front than others for the mere purpose of being first at the plunder, and some were in ditches into which they had tumbled, professing to be wounded. One of these, an English officer, was observed by one of his own men. Two or three soldiers immediately threatened to shoot him if he did not come out of his hiding-place."

The plundering now became universal over a wide area of fields, orchards, and houses. The enemy in this engagement lost above a thousand men; Evans nearly half that number.

Three days later, before daybreak, the Carlists made a desperate attempt to recover a height commanding the town of Passages, occupied by the marines and their artillery. A marine officer, seeing them emerge from cover, quickly and carefully prepared a heavy dose of canister shot, and with one dreadful, simultaneous volley tumbled the whole force, dead, wounded, and living, down the rocky paths, and hotly peppered the surviving fugitives.

After a dangerous mutiny amongst the men of several of the English regiments, who were, it must be said, neglected by the

Spanish government, ill paid, half starved, and cruelly flogged for the slightest offence, the Carlists, on October the 1st, again attacked the Ametza lines, and were again repulsed with the loss of more than one thousand men. Of the Legion there fell under four hundred, including thirty-seven officers. The Lancers behaved very gallantly on this occasion, and Evans, always to the fore, had a ball pass through one of his ears. We must pass over with a mere word the poisoning of English soldiers at Vittoria, and the garotting of Don José Elgoez, the chief baker. Some fifteen hundred men died at this place of the poisoned bread and aquadiente. Nor can we stop to describe the burning alive of eleven English prisoners by the Christinos, or the taking of Bilbao. On March the 16th, there was hard fighting near Hernani, when (owing to the dastardly treachery of Espartero, and the jealous or cowardly Spaniards) the English had to retreat with the loss of nearly nine hundred men. The town of Irun was soon after taken, Andoain fell, and Espartero, with thirty thousand men, eventually entered Madrid. A few months later, a hundred and twenty-seven of the Legion, with thirteen officers, deserted by the Christino regiments, capitulated at Andoain, and were foully butchered by the cruel enemy. In May, 1837, the Legion was disbanded, and Evans returned to England. Not long after, Colonel O'Connell's new legion of thirteen hundred and ninety-three men, disgusted with the Spaniards, also broke up. There is quite proof enough that, under a man like Wellington, "the Isle of Dogians," as the Tories called the British Legion, would have rivalled the deeds of the heroes of Salamanca and of Waterloo.

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

BEHOLD Lelgarde settled in her new possessions, queening it in the gloomy old house and stiff gardens, which had not seen anything so fresh and sweet, I am sure, for a very long time. Athelstanes lay in a wild part of Yorkshire, only to be approached by a network of railways, every one of which was at daggers drawn with all the others; stage-coaches lingered there still, and the nearest station was ten miles off. The Athelings had been there ever since the year one. It was their boast that

Atheling of Athelstane
Stood on his hearth when the Conqueror came.

And they prided themselves on the fair Saxon colouring, which, from generation to generation, had been as completely a possession of the Athelings as their coat of arms. I do not know if they had been careful to choose light-complexioned wives, but certainly, with few exceptions, every family portrait had the same characteristics of sunny hair and fair delicate colouring, matching well with their Saxon names. The house itself was Elizabethan—the regular E shape, the drawing-room occupying one projection, the other contained, as we were given to understand, “poor Miss Hilda’s apartments;” and the old housekeeper, who offered the information, sighed as she spoke. She was the only old servant who had chosen to remain; the rest appeared to harbour resentment against Lelgarde for the slight she had put on Athelstan in her childish days, or perhaps for being young, or for not being Miss Etheldreda; any how they declined to stay, but Mrs. Bracebridge remained, and, though she began by treating us with a deadly politeness, which froze the marrow in our bones, she was now gradually succumbing to the irresistible influence of Lelgarde’s graciousness, a graciousness which had in it a certain touch of hauteur that probably recalled Miss Etheldreda, as lemonade might remind one of vinegar. I need not say much about the grounds, which were not beautiful; a wide flat paddock in front, not large enough to be dignified by the name of park, walled kitchen-gardens, and a stiff square flower-garden at the back, plantations closing it all in, and beyond, wild moors stretching away into the distance. This was Athelstan’s. When I add that the handsome furniture had seen its best days, that there was a great deal of white paint and white dimity, in vivid contrast to a great deal of dark polished oak, that everybody’s bedroom seemed to lead in and out of everybody else’s, and that every square inch of wall was covered with family portraits, I have said all that need be said of Lelgarde’s domain.

For the first few days, Lelgarde was extremely busy: the engaging of new servants, the looking over of inventories, and ceaseless interviews with the various retainers, occupying every moment. She was looking rather oppressed with her new responsibilities, but I could not perceive that the sight of Athelstan in any degree awakened old recollections.

“Come,” I said, one wild wet afternoon, when I found her leaning her little tired head on her hand, after holding one of her

business levees, “you look as if you had had enough of it, I must say. Come and do something more amusing.”

“What can one do on such a day?” Lelgarde said, drawing her scarlet cloak up round her shoulders, with a shiver. She was a very barometer, and withered up in cold or rainy weather like any tropical plant.

“Just the day to let Mrs. Bracebridge take us all over the house; she is dying to do so.”

Lelgarde agreed: so, prudently wrapped up, we summoned the housekeeper, and prepared to make the grand tour.

Going steadily over anything, be it picture-gallery, museum, or big house, always has the effect of leaving one sodden and depressed. By the time we had done it all, Lelgarde and I were both in this state, and thankful when an unexpected staircase suddenly landed us in the front hall again. Here hung the principal modern portraits; among them the old squire, and what I had soon recognised as a boyish likeness of Lelgarde’s father.

“And who is the one hanging next to him, the very handsome young woman in the blue satin?” I asked.

“That,” replied Mrs. Bracebridge, reverentially, “was my late mistress, Miss Atheling.”

Somehow I had felt sure of it when I asked the question; the high, delicate features, and hard expression, were so exactly what I had pictured Miss Etheldreda. Hard—that was the word for her—just, I dare say, and therefore liked by her dependents, but certainly as disagreeable a woman, with all her beauty, as eye ever looked upon.

“Now,” continued Mrs. Bracebridge, “would you like to see poor Miss Hilda’s rooms? I don’t know why I go on keeping them locked: will you like to see them, ma’am?”

“By all means,” answered Lelgarde, eagerly, for we had exchanged small jokes about the Blue Chamber, which was always kept closed. When opened, it looked commonplace enough: handsome, faded furniture, a capacious invalid couch, a very curious tall cabinet of ebony, inlaid with ivory, heavy crimson curtains hanging low over the narrow window—this was all.

“She was a great sufferer,” the old woman said, softly; “for nearly fifteen years she never left this room, and the one next it, poor lady.”

“What was her illness?”

Mrs. Bracebridge hesitated, I thought, and then answered:

"A nervous affection, ma'am; she lost, little by little, the use of her limbs; my mistress nursed her devotedly, and was the only person who could manage the poor lady for her good."

Shut up for fifteen years in that room, and managed for one's good by that horrible cold-eyed woman. What a life! But something besides struck me in Mrs. Bracebridge's tone. I wondered if the poor thing had been mad, and if that inheritance, too, threatened my Lelgarde. I turned to look at her, and saw her standing, quite intent on the old cabinet, with a puzzled, lost expression on her face, which surprised me.

"Where can I have seen a cabinet like this before?" she asked, knitting her brows in perplexity; "I seem to know it quite well. Is there anything in it, Mrs. Bracebridge?"

Mrs. Bracebridge did not know. Mr. Graves had overhauled and superintended the valuing of everything, she said; and the key, with several others, had been given to Lelgarde. She at once produced the bunch, and selecting the key that fitted, opened the doors, revealing a quaint nest of pigeon-holes and drawers.

"We will not keep you, Mrs. Bracebridge," she said; "I have a fancy to look this over, and this is just the afternoon for it."

Mrs. Bracebridge demurred, with a glance at the empty grate; but Lelgarde vowed she was not at all cold, and was evidently bent on her search.

"That is right," she cried, when we were left alone; and she eagerly began to examine the drawers. The result was disappointing. Miss Hilda, whatever had been her woes, had been too wise to write them down for the amusement of future generations. One closely-written manuscript book turned out to contain receipts for cookery and for knitting; there was a herbarium, which had come to a standstill in the middle, an old-fashioned album, also ending half-way through, and several sketch-books. These last were rather interesting; they contained graceful, slight outlines, with no great force about them, and to many the dates were added, dates of six or seven-and-twenty years ago. Here and there was a bolder sketch, of quite a different stamp of merit; landscapes, chiefly—some scenes in the neighbourhood; and we both noticed that in almost every foreground the same figure was introduced: that of a slight girl, not unlike Lelgarde herself, sitting, standing, or on horseback;

it constantly recurred, always unmistakably the same person.

"And not Miss Etheldreda," said Lelgarde. "Could it be this poor Hilda in her young days? If so, I think this artist, whoever he was, must have been rather fond of Miss Hilda." Lelgarde blushed, I observed, and sighed. "There is something sad in looking over these things," she said, rather, I thought, to account for the sigh. "Poor Hilda was young and merry then, I suppose, like me. How little she thought what her life was going to be!"

As she spoke she was incessantly passing her fingers over the back of the little recess which we were then exploring; a restless movement which she had been continually repeating ever since we had begun our examination.

"It is strange how well I seem to know this piece of furniture," she said; "but I fancy there ought to be some secret drawer or cupboard here somewhere, only I cannot find out how to open it."

"Ought to be? What do you mean?"

"I cannot explain; that is just what puzzles me; only I feel as if there ought to be—just that."

Were old recollections reviving, I wondered; but what an unlikely thing to awaken them! It was getting too dark to carry our researches further, and the cold was becoming intense.

"Come," I said, "we shall catch our deaths. Come and get warm."

"You disturbed me," she cried, petulantly; "I had just got hold of it. I only seem to want one link more to remember something."

She started and clung to me; for close, close to us, just behind the cabinet, was a rustle, as of a sweeping dress, and the dull thud of some falling body; a gust, at the same moment, swept through the room, and a wild splash of rain against the window seemed to bring darkness with it. We clung together, like two fools as we were, and Lelgarde shrieked aloud. At that sound Mrs. Bracebridge appeared with a candle, and I at least grew brave at the sight of it.

"A mouse, I dare say, ma'am," she remarked, deferential but contemptuous, in answer to our apologetic statement.

"No; there is something—something white," gasped Lelgarde, pointing to the dark corner.

Mrs. Bracebridge stooped to examine it.

"Yes, indeed, I quite forgot that it had been put away behind the cabinet. You

must have shaken it down, ma'am, in pulling out the drawers."

"And it is?"

"Poor Miss Hilda's picture, ma'am, that is all."

CHAPTER IV.

LELGARDE and I had dined, and were sitting by the drawing-room fire afterwards, when my sister said, giving a shrinking look into all the dark corners:

"Joan, I hate that dreary room opposite. I shall have it locked up again, and Mrs. Bracebridge shall keep the key."

"So as to turn it into a haunted chamber at once! My dear, before it had been shut up a week, you would have ghosts, and rumours of ghosts, demoralising the whole establishment! You would never keep a servant, depend upon it."

"It has given me the horrors," she answered, with a shiver.

"Because we were geese enough to be frightened at nothing. Come, Lelgarde, let me advise you. Have a fire lighted there; open all the windows, do it up with a set of Cretonne chintz, all over blue and scarlet dickey-birds; ask the seven vicarage children to tea there, and let them make themselves ill with plum-cake, and greasy with bread-and-butter, and you will find Miss Hilda's ghost is laid in no time."

The door opened slowly, causing Lelgarde to jump almost into my arms.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, if I startled you," said Mrs. Bracebridge, advancing out of the shadow with a large square of canvas in her arms; "you desired me to bring this for you to look at after dinner—poor Miss Hilda's picture."

"Tiresome old woman!" I thought, "as if we had not had enough of Miss Hilda for one day;" but the housekeeper was only obeying Lelgarde's orders, and I could say nothing, so we proceeded to look at the portrait. We both exclaimed with surprise at seeing its unfinished state: the drapery of the head and shoulders was merely sketched out, not coloured at all. The face only was complete, and the hair again died away into indistinctness, in a way that gave a strange ghastly look to the features—high, delicate features, so like Miss Atheling's, that the difference of expression was the more striking. For this was a gentle face, so sweet that one half forgave its utter weakness. I quite forgave it, when I thought of the hard, stern face hung in the hall, and recollected that Etheldreda was many years older than her sister, and had doubtless ruled her with

a rod of iron all her days. The two faces seemed to me to tell their own story, and I could understand how each sister had unconsciously helped to make the other what she had been. There was a bright smile on the painted lips—a laugh in the pretty blue eyes; and yet "Poor young thing!" were the words which rose to my lips as I looked.

"Ah! you may say that, ma'am," responded Mrs. Bracebridge, with a sigh—rather a leading sigh, I thought, as if she longed to be asked what she was sighing for. Lelgarde did what answered the purpose, in exclaiming:

"Why was this lovely picture never finished and framed? And oh! who could have done that?" For right across the canvas, barely sparing the face, was a broad rough splash of colour, as if an angry or careless hand had dashed aside a wet brush, not recking where it went.

"Ah! it is a long story," said the old woman, evidently dying to tell it.

"If it is a doleful one, pray let it wait till to-morrow," I said; but Lelgarde waved me aside, impatiently, and, pointing to an arm-chair,

"Then sit down and tell it, Mrs. Bracebridge," she said, "and let me pour you out a cup of tea meanwhile. You see," she added, with her pretty graciousness, "you belong so completely to this place, so much more than I do; and whatever you know about the family, I think I ought to know: so please begin."

"I will pour out the tea," I said, and betook myself to the massive silver salver and teapot, much amused at Lelgarde taking the high moral tone, to choke any qualms of conscience at gratifying her curiosity by a gossip with the old servant.

"It is going on for seven-and-twenty years, ma'am, since Miss Atheling's portrait was taken and this one commenced," Mrs. Bracebridge solemnly began, "and the gentleman as took both was a Mr. Hamilton, one of them artist gentlemen from London. The old squire was living then, you are aware, ladies, and he had this young gentleman down for the summer months—which many wondered as he liked to do so—to take the young ladies' portraits, and to give Miss Hilda lessons, and to make drawings about the place."

"How old were my cousins at this time?" Lelgarde asked from the shadowy corner where she sat intently listening.

"Let me see: Miss Atheling would have been over thirty, and Miss Hilda, I mind me, was just of age. I was lately come,

then, myself, and was head housemaid under the old housekeeper—nurse, as she was mostly called, having nursed both the ladies, and the little brothers as died between."

"Was she here, when I——" Lelgarde hesitated, knitting her brows as if in a painful effort to remember.

"She was, ma'am; but she had then for some years been Miss Hilda's attendant, and Miss Atheling had been pleased to put me in her place, as housekeeper. I need not tell you, ladies," she went on, "that there is, and always will be, gossip in the servants' hall, let the upper servants check it as they may; and it was not long before we were all talking about Miss Hilda and Mr. Hamilton."

Lelgarde and I thought of the sketch-book, and exchanged glances.

"You see, Miss Atheling never seemed to think of Miss Hilda as anything but a child; and sure she did look like it, and always took it as natural that she should be treated as such—she was so meek-spirited; and certainly nothing, in a general way, could have happened to her, even to the altering of the way she dressed her hair, but what Miss Atheling should know of it. But just that summer it fell out that the squire began of the illness which carried him off later—some terrible complaint in his inside."

"And Miss Atheling was with him a great deal, I suppose," I said, hastily, as the old woman seemed inclined to plunge into unpleasant details.

"Night and day, ma'am; and all that time Mr. Hamilton was thought to be busy making his sketches about the place, and Miss Hilda practising her music, and all that, in the room yonder, which was then called the schoolroom. But we servants, ma'am, could have told a different tale."

"It was a pity you did not," said I, virtuously.

"It was nurse's place, ma'am, she being the housekeeper, not ours; and nurse could refuse nothing to Miss Hilda, not if it had been a knife to cut her own throat, we often used to say. Well, the rights of it I cannot tell you, ladies, for I was never made acquainted with it; but one day, it is certain that Miss Atheling came into the schoolroom, and found Mr. Hamilton painting her sister's portrait, or, maybe, pretending to paint it; and what passed I cannot say—for Miss Atheling was not one to make any noise about her anger; but I met her in the hall, taking Miss Hilda to

her room; and her face, ladies—it was terrible."

"And what happened?"

"Mr. Hamilton left the house that very hour, and the portrait was huddled away in a lumber-room, and there it stayed till long, long afterwards. I saw it one day, in poor Miss Hilda's room, put away behind the cabinet; I suppose nurse must have brought it down at her request, poor lady."

"And what did my cousin do to her sister?" asked Lelgarde, with dilated eyes, as if she expected to hear that she had tortured her.

"Her look was enough to cow Miss Hilda, ma'am, at any time; beyond that, I never heard that the poor young lady was punished; I am sure Miss Atheling's one wish was to keep it all from folk's knowledge, and specially the old squire. And in the autumn they all went to London for Mr. Atheling's health, and stayed away the whole winter."

"Did you go with them?"

"No, ma'am, only Miss Atheling's maid, and one or two men-servants, as they stayed at a hotel. And nurse went too, and that was the beginning of her being about Miss Hilda; for the maid, she had enough to do with helping Miss Atheling attending upon the squire: oh! he was a great sufferer."

"Did he die in London? I forget," asked Lelgarde.

"Oh, no, ma'am, they all came back in early spring; and Miss Hilda, she looked almost as like to die as her father; all the spirit seemed to have gone out of her: days and days she never stirred from her room: but Miss Atheling was that wrapped up in the squire, that she saw nothing else. At last nurse told her that poor Miss Hilda must have mild sea-air, which had saved her from a decline before, and might again; leastways nothing else would. And so at last she got leave to take her quite away by the seaside, down somewhere in Devonshire. I could see that it angered my poor mistress that she could not go with her, and she was angry too, maybe, that Miss Hilda would not rather stay at home and die, than go so far away when her father might be dying any moment; but there, there was no denying how ill she was—and she let her go."

"Was she away when the squire died?"

"No, ma'am, he seemed to rally for a bit, and it was not till quite the end of the summer that he died; and, as it fell out, the very day poor Miss Hilda came home. Shall I ever forget her face when she came

out of the sick-room? How she flung herself down, and called herself wicked and undutiful, blaming herself, no doubt, for having been away; unless, poor lady, she had anything else to reproach herself with. Nurse was as close as the grave; but I know folks did talk——"

She hesitated; and I saw no occasion to rake up dead and gone scandal for Lelgarde's innocent ears; though I had long been thinking that if these were Atheling manners, one might as well be Smith.

"And how soon did Miss Hilda's long illness set in?" I asked.

Mrs. Bracebridge shook her head; and, for the first time, the tears came into her eyes.

"Ah! ma'am, it was at that very time; the very week her papa was buried; but 'twasn't that, 'twas the sudden shock as did it."

"What shock?"

"That Mr. Hamilton's death, ma'am; he was killed somewhere in those snow-mountains where the gentlefolks is always meeting with their deaths; and Miss Hilda, she read it on the newspaper, without a word to prepare her. There is no doubt she was much attached to him, poor young lady."

"I dare say her sister was sorry for them," said Lelgarde, her voice sinking as she uttered this improbable conjecture.

"Well, ma'am, my mistress thought a great deal of the honour of the family; perhaps it was a blessing looked at so; but naturally Miss Hilda could not be expected to see it. However, I should not talk, for whatever words they had 'twas never before their servants. Only once I did—I did chance to hear"—(Mrs. Bracebridge became rather confused)—"just an angry word or two. Miss Etheldreda was telling her how she ought to be ashamed to give way—how she ought rather to give thanks on her bended knees—that it might be this was an imposition of Providence."

"Interposition?" I suggested.

"Just so, ma'am, to save her and the family from disgrace. 'Disgrace!' Miss Hilda did cry out then. I never heard her speak up so proud, though her voice was all of a shake; and then my mistress, she went on talking, but she would always hush her voice when she was in anger; and all I heard was something about seeing her sister dead at her feet—and then distinct came the words, 'killed him with my

own hands,' and then, oh! dear, what a cry Miss Hilda did give, and, poor young lady, she went off into one of those terrible hysteric fits which grew upon her more and more—not that my mistress would ever have done such a wicked thing."

"I should think not," I said, as a vivid picture of Miss Atheling ascending the gallows in a black satin gown rose before me, and made me laugh; but a woman who was in the habit of uttering such threats as those must have been a very unpleasant person to live with, and I no longer wondered at the constantly recurring "poor Miss Hilda."

"And her health got worse and worse, I suppose?" asked Lelgarde.

"Worse and worse; with those hysteric fits, if they was hysteric, and one thing and another, till she had no use of her limbs; though the doctors, and law! she had doctors enough to have killed a whole hospital full, would have it 'twere only nervous suppression!"

"Depression, was not it?"

"Very likely, ma'am, or it might have been both, and a hundred other things as well, I am sure. Nurse could have told you more than I, for she was always with her night and day; and so it went on for nigh fifteen years, and then poor nurse, who had been failing for some time with the heart complaint, she was taken for death, suddenly, in Miss Hilda's very room; and Miss Hilda, she never spoke afterwards, and was dead within the week."

"Thank you; it is a sad story, but I think I ought to know it," said Lelgarde, morally again, as she rose to dismiss the old woman. Mrs. Bracebridge had curtsied herself to the door, when my sister, who had stood fixedly gazing on the picture, turned suddenly towards her.

"You are sure Miss Hilda had quite lost the use of her limbs," she asked, abruptly.

"Oh! entirely, ma'am, she never left her couch for many years."

Lelgarde looked at her dreamily, and passed her hand over her forehead, as if only half awake.

"Then she could not walk about the house? It was impossible, was it?"

"I suppose so, ma'am," said the old woman, evidently surprised.

"Yes," returned Lelgarde, in the same lost, dreamy manner, "Yes, I suppose so; yes, of course it must have been out of the question."

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